



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Big Bend National Park
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Big Bend National Park News Release

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Big Bend National Park to Receive Comments on Exotic Species Management

Big Bend National Park requests public comments to help the park plan management of non-native, exotic plants and animals in the park. The 30-day comment period includes public meetings in Study Butte and Alpine.

To protect the park's natural and cultural resources, Big Bend National Park proposes to develop and implement plans for managing trespass livestock, exotic animals, and exotic plants. The plans will provide guidance and a decision framework for exotic species management over the coming decades.

In addition to livestock, primarily horses and burros, the park has identified feral hogs, Barbary sheep, saltcedar, giant cane, buffelgrass, and other non-native species as threats to park resources.

Meetings for the public to help identify issues and concerns, and make other comments regarding exotic species and their management will be held at the Brewster County Multi-Purpose Facility in Study Butte on July 14, and the Sul Ross State University Morgan Conference Center in Alpine on July 15. Both meetings will begin at 6:00 pm and continue until 7:00 pm.

The meetings complement the scoping period that begins June 30, 2015, and ends July 29, 2015. The public, organizations, and others are invited to submit written comments throughout the 30-day period. NPS Policies direct exotic species be managed if control is prudent and feasible and the species interferes with natural processes and the perpetuation of natural features, native species or natural habitats.

Environmental Assessments (EAs) will be prepared for each management plan in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to provide the decision-making framework that 1) explores a reasonable range of alternatives to meet project objectives; 2) evaluates potential issues and impacts to park resources and values; 3) identifies measures to lessen the degree or extent of these impacts; and 4) describes an approach and methods for exotic species management over the long-term.

The NPS encourages public participation throughout the NEPA process. The public has two opportunities to formally participate - during this public scoping period and later, during public review of the plans/EAs.

Comments submitted during this public scoping period will be considered during preparation of the plans/EAs. The NPS prefers comments be submitted via the National Park Service Planning, Environment and Public Comment web site, <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/bibe>. However, comments may be made in writing at the scheduled public meetings; by email to: bibe_planning@nps.gov; or by mail, addressed to: Superintendent, PO Box 129, Big Bend National Park, TX 79834.

Note: A scoping brochure is also available at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/bibe>

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